

## **Mumps (infectious parotitis)**

### **What is mumps?**

Mumps is an acute viral disease characterized by fever, swelling and tenderness of one or more of the salivary glands.

### **Who gets mumps?**

Although older people may contract the disease, mumps usually occurs in children between the ages of five and 15. Mumps occurs less regularly than other common childhood communicable diseases. The greatest risk of infection occurs among older children. Mumps is more common during winter and spring.

### **How is mumps spread?**

Mumps is transmitted by direct contact with saliva and discharges from the nose and throat of infected individuals.

### **What are the symptoms of mumps?**

Symptoms of mumps include fever, swelling and tenderness of one or more of the salivary glands, usually the parotid gland (located just below the front of the ear). Approximately one-third of infected people do not exhibit symptoms.

### **How soon after infection do symptoms occur?**

The incubation period is usually 16 to 18 days, although it may vary from 12 to 25 days.

### **What complications have been associated with mumps?**

Swelling of the testicles occurs in 15-25 percent of infected males. Mumps can cause central nervous system disorders such as encephalitis (inflammation of the brain) and meningitis (inflammation of the covering of the brain and spinal column). Other complications include arthritis, kidney involvement, inflammation of the thyroid gland and breasts and deafness.

### **When and for how long is a person able to spread mumps?**

Mumps is contagious three days prior to and four days after the onset of symptoms.

### **Does past infection with mumps make a person immune?**

Yes. Immunity acquired after contracting the disease is usually permanent.

### **Is there a vaccine for mumps?**

Yes. Mumps vaccine is given on or after a child's first birthday and is usually administered in combination with measles and rubella vaccine. The vaccine is highly effective and one injection usually produces lifelong protection.

### **What can be done to prevent the spread of mumps?**

The single most effective control measure is maintaining the highest possible level of immunization in the community. Children should not attend school during their infectious period.

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**Taken from New York State Department of Health Communicable Disease Fact Sheets.**